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New York

President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 9 and 122 (continued)

Report of the Security Council (A/62/2)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. Christian (Ghana): I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the President of the Security Council for this month, Ambassador Natalegawa, Permanent Representative of Indonesia, for his introduction yesterday morning of the annual report of the Security Council for the period 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007 (A/62/2).

Ghana associates itself with the statement delivered yesterday afternoon by the representative of Angola, on behalf of the African Group, on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council.

During the period under review, the Council's programme of work covered various issues relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, including threats to peace and security, conflicts, peacekeeping operations and post-conflict peacebuilding. The breadth and depth of the problems that had to be dealt with kept the Council busy throughout the year. As stated in the report, the Council met in 224 formal meetings, of which 184 were public, in addition to 22 meetings with troop-contributing countries. It also held 192 consultations of the whole, adopted 71 resolutions and 52 presidential statements, and issued 47 statements to the press.

We welcome the Council's growing engagement and cooperation with the African Union (AU) in all aspects of peacekeeping. That cooperation is now widely acknowledged to be essential in resolving effectively the remaining conflicts on the African continent. In that connection, the visit undertaken by the Security Council in June 2007 to a number of African countries was very significant.

The extensive and fruitful discussions held with key AU personalities — including the current Chairman, President J. A. Kufuor of Ghana, and the Chairperson of the AU Commission, President Alpha Oumar Konaré — were cemented with an agreement for the two bodies to meet yearly. Additionally, the Council is to explore how the United Nations could further assist the AU in its peacekeeping efforts, particularly when it is acting under the Council's mandate.

We commend the Secretary-General for his efforts to resolve the Darfur crisis as well as to ensure that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement is thoroughly and effectively implemented. The unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 1769 (2007), authorizing the establishment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, was an important development in the peace process and reflects a solid consensus between the AU and United Nations on the way forward.

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The situations in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Burundi were also continuously reviewed by the Council. We remain hopeful that the international community will continue to assist those sister African countries in the arduous task of consolidating their hard-won peace.

On the other hand, Somalia remains in turmoil, as the President of the Council rightly stated. The scale of violence, including factional fighting and the activities of extremist groups, continues to take a heavy toll on the civilian population, and there seems to be no end in sight to the bloodshed and misery. In spite of its courageous efforts, the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) is severely handicapped by inadequate funding and logistics, which have prevented it from deploying to its full capacity.

We reiterate our full support for the Council's call for a broad and inclusive political process in Somalia, as well as for international assistance to the AU, in order to pave the way for the transformation of AMISOM into a United Nations peacekeeping operation.

We commend the Congolese delegation, Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, for its initiative in preparing a working paper for a seminar, scheduled for December 2007, based on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1625 (2005). The recommendations that will emerge from the seminar should provide the basis for enhancing coordination and coherence among stakeholders.

We also applaud the Council for dealing with country-specific issues as well as holding thematic debates, since both types of debate are necessary for the execution of the Council's mandate. The thematic debates provide occasions for in-depth consideration of topical issues relating to the maintenance of peace and security. It also gives non-members of the Council the opportunity to participate in those important meetings.

The Council's missions to Afghanistan, Kosovo, Côte d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of the Congo afforded members an opportunity to assess on-the-spot factors militating against the resolution of the crises and problems of those countries. The missions undoubtedly enhanced the knowledge and understanding of Council members and led to their better appreciation of the situations in those countries.

The Council continued its monthly consideration of the situation in the Middle East and the Palestinian question. It also discussed the question of Lebanon, the implementation of resolutions 1701 (2006) and 1559 (2004), the International Independent Investigation Commission and the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. We believe that the Council should persist in its efforts to find a peaceful and lasting solution to the Middle East problem in all its aspects. We share the view that the current situation in the region poses a great threat to international peace and security.

We acknowledge the Council's commitment to the fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Three of its subsidiary bodies — the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999), concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban; the Counter-Terrorism Committee, established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001); and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), on weapons of mass destruction and terrorism — have kept the Council well informed of their activities and have been transparent; they offer a good example to other subsidiary bodies of the Council.

My delegation reiterates the need to enhance the credibility of the Council through substantive reform guided by the principles of democracy, the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical representation.

A reformed Security Council should be transparent in its activities and more responsive to the interests of the general membership in matters deriving from its mandate under the Charter, the more so given that all Member States of the United Nations are called upon — indeed, are obliged — to share the burden of the maintenance of international peace and security through, inter alia, assessed contributions to the peacekeeping budget, the provision of troops for United Nations peacekeeping missions and the implementation of resolutions adopted by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the Charter.

Against that background, Ghana renews its support for the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, and reiterates Africa's request for two permanent seats on the Security Council, with all the privileges of permanent membership, in addition to five non-permanent seats. Africa, the largest regional group in the Organization, is, paradoxically, the only

region excluded from the category of permanent membership.

We commend the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council for its work during the previous session, and welcome the General Assembly's decision to continue to address the question of reform during its sixty-second session.

Finally, I congratulate the five new non-permanent members of the Security Council — Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Croatia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Viet Nam — on their election. I am confident that the new members will work for a more transparent Security Council, in line with the general reform of the United Nations, in order to make it more effective in meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Mr. Hackett (Barbados): At the outset, I thank Ambassador Natalegawa, Permanent Representative of Indonesia and current President of the Security Council, for his detailed introduction, yesterday morning, of the report of the Security Council (A/62/2).

The report is largely factual, and not as analytical as many delegations have been requesting. I nevertheless commend the members of the Council for the work they have undertaken during the reporting period, and express the hope that one aspect of the reform of the Council will be a change in the format of the report to make it more analytical and lend itself to a more interactive discussion between the Council and members of the General Assembly on its work.

Although the work of the Council encompassed all regions of the world, once again the focus was largely on African issues. My delegation thanks the members of the Council for all their efforts in seeking to bring peace and stability where there is conflict in the African region. Given the strong interrelationship between peace, security and development, we believe that peace and sustained stability constitute an essential platform — a precondition, if you will — for further and sustained development progress in the countries of Africa.

Barbados also welcomes the attention that the Council has paid to the situation in Haiti and the support provided to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

My delegation would also like to make a number of points about agenda item 122, on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. We commend the efforts of the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, and her facilitators in guiding the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council over the past session, as well as for the work they have undertaken and the recommendations that they have presented to us.

The increasing intensity of the pace of activities and the volume and scope of the issues that come before the Council are further compelling arguments that reform of that major body of the Organization is urgently needed. The world is not the same as when the Organization was created, 62 years ago. We now have an Organization of 192 Member States with varying levels of political and economic development and differing priority interests.

The changing face of our world requires changes in the United Nations, that most important multilateral body that seeks to respond to the varied global problems and challenges in the interest of all Member States. That is true, we believe, for all three pillars of activity of the United Nations: development, peace and security, and human rights. On the development side, we have seen some initial reform, with the revitalization of the Economic and Social Council. On human rights, we have had the creation of the Human Rights Council.

However, there has been no change in the structure and functioning of the Security Council, the principal organ of the United Nations that seeks to promote international peace and security and was the subject of the broad United Nations reform agenda that emanated from the 2005 World Summit. Indeed, in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) world leaders resolved to support early reform of the Security Council in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent, and enhance its effectiveness and legitimacy.

Barbados was a sponsor of draft resolution A/61/L.69/Rev.1 because we believed that, after 14

years of informal discussions and consultations on the issue of Security Council reform, and with the mandate from the 2005 United Nations Summit, it was time for intergovernmental negotiations to begin. We further believe that the consultations to date have provided a number of useful ideas that can be the basis for those consultations.

In that regard, Barbados believes that a reformed Security Council should have an increase in membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. We further believe that additional permanent members should come from both the developed and developing worlds, and that the arrangements for the increase in the number of non-permanent members should allow for greater representation from small States and island States.

The use of the veto should be limited, with a move towards its eventual abolition. A review mechanism after a reasonable period of time — we suggest about 15 years — will also be essential.

Achieving success in those negotiations will require a strong commitment by all Member States. You, Mr. President, should determine, through an objective and transparent process, the elements that command the widest support, so that they can serve as the basis for those intergovernmental negotiations.

Together, we should seek to create a reformed organ with an expanded membership that better reflects contemporary world realities, an organ that possesses a set of working methods that are formalized, clear and transparent, and provide for greater accessibility to its work by non-members. That, we believe, will help to increase the legitimacy of the Security Council and make it a more effective body that is responsive to the views and needs of all Member States.

In conclusion, let me thank you, Mr. President, for your commitment to the reform of the Council. We look forward to your starting the intergovernmental negotiations in the very near future, as requested in the draft resolution to which I referred, and to your taking a leading role in the process — all with a view to a successful conclusion during the sixty-second session.

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica): The Jamaican delegation welcomes another opportunity to participate in a debate on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. This is an important opportunity to build on the momentum generated earlier this year during the sixty-first session towards meaningful progress on the contentious issue of Security Council reform.

My delegation also acknowledges, with deep appreciation, the efforts made by the President of the Assembly at its sixty-first session, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa of Bahrain, who, in a committed, dedicated and transparent manner, successfully built on the work of her predecessor in putting reform of the Security Council at the top of the Assembly's agenda. Let me repeat again Jamaica's commitment to working together to build upon the momentum under the previous presidency towards meaningful progress on the very contentious and rarely debated issue of Security Council reform.

The Jamaican delegation reiterates its position with regard to the reform of the Security Council. As I have had occasion to state previously, it has been recognized and generally acknowledged that the initial positions of many groups and some individual States on the reform of the Security Council are not attainable.

The situation as it now stands, in my delegation's estimation, is that all States need to show greater flexibility in order to curtail the continuous cycle of consultations and routine placement of the issue on successive agendas of the General Assembly that has characterized the debate on the reform of the Security Council over the past 10 to 14 years. The process needs to be advanced towards meaningful intergovernmental negotiations. We therefore welcome the strides made in that regard in the just-concluded sixty-first session.

Jamaica supports the notion that any solution or formula found must have the support of more than just a majority of States; it must be able to attract the widest possible acceptance by Members of the United Nations, namely, support by the required two thirds majority of the General Assembly, including, obviously, ratification by the permanent Five, as stipulated by Article 108 of the Charter.

Such a solution must also address the question of access, on two counts: first, increased opportunity to serve on the Council, including representation by developing countries; and, secondly, involvement outside it. In that regard, its working methods need to be urgently and comprehensively overhauled as well.

While we may not achieve consensus on all the broad elements, we must necessarily be cautious in proceeding with a partial approach that does not seek to address the most glaring inequities in the structure and operations of the Council. We are naturally concerned that the transitional arrangement now proposed seeks to proceed along a path of expansion of the non-permanent seats only, and that a decision on the creation of new permanent seats would have to be deferred until a later stage. In essence, this proposal seems to be adopting one option over another, and fails to take into account the support by a vast majority of States for expansion in both categories.

Additionally, the proposal for the creation of new non-permanent seats as well as an intermediate category requires, in the view of the Jamaican delegation, the most careful and cautious examination. In this regard, there are serious issues arising which require clarification, such as who would be eligible, for what duration and what would be the implication as regards the crowding out and overshadowing of other members in the non-permanent category.

We should also keep at the forefront of our minds that amendments to the Charter are not everyday occurrences, and that proposed amendments would have to proceed on the basis of the broadest agreement among Member States, including members of the permanent five. Proposed amendments as envisaged under Article 108 of the Charter should therefore not be interim, but should be of a long-term duration.

There are other contentious issues, such as the veto. The vast majority of Member States agree that the veto is anachronistic, obsolete and undemocratic, and should therefore be abolished. Until such time, we could agree to the other more readily achievable steps, such as ways of enhancing accountability for its use, limitations of the scope of its application, and individual or collective pledges to refrain from its use in certain instances. The permanent five, in our view, should be encouraged to support reform in all its aspects.

We do not see much difficulty in reaching agreement on expansion in terms of the additional number of seats. Jamaica could agree to one or two options that were suggested in the sixty-first session, while paying due regard to reconciling concerns to make sure that the Council is both efficient and representative. However, we must emphasize that this approach should ensure expansion in both categories.

Working methods should go hand in hand with the broad reform of the Council. However, as we wait on full reform, action could be taken on some of the more egregious deficiencies which impede access for non-members of the Council.

Finally, we all agree that the debate on Security Council reform has gone on for far too long. We are not entirely sanguine that the current process of consultations, or even the negotiations that are currently being called for, will find a way out of the impasse by way of a political consensus. I may add that some of the statements I heard in the Assembly yesterday give me cause for concern.

But there is no question as to the urgent need for the intergovernmental negotiations to be allowed to commence in earnest. It is clear to us that if positive strides are to be made, we, the Member States, will have to find the will and create the necessary resolve to overcome the barriers that have retarded our every move to march forward.

In the absence of consensus, let us resolve and, indeed, summon the political courage, during this sixty-second session, to put to the test a draft resolution that can garner the widest possible support within the General Assembly and reach the required two-thirds majority, as stipulated by Article 108 of the Charter and Rule 83 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly.

Ms. Rodríguez de Ortiz (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is grateful to the representative of Indonesia for presenting the report of the Security Council (A/62/2), on which we wish to make a number of comments.

The report of the Security Council continues to be merely descriptive, a chronological compendium of meetings and documents, and does not enable us to assess the Council's achievements and advances, or the difficulties that it faces in its work. We reiterate the need for the Council to present a broader and more analytical report enabling us to understand how it dealt with the various items on its agenda, as well as to see the views expressed by Member States, the way in which decisions were taken, or why specific matters were not considered.

As the report indicates, the Council worked at an intense pace, with an increase in the volume and scope of the questions before it. Matters relating to Africa again occupied a prominent place in its programme of work, as did the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine. The fight against terrorism also continued to be among its highest priorities.

Questions of peace and security are interdependent and inseparable from those of development. Venezuela is convinced that the United Nations must address the issue of conflicts in Africa in an integrated and coordinated fashion, taking into account not simply the security dimension, but also economic and social variables. International cooperation to tackle the economic and social problems of African countries should be sustained and unconditional, so that each State may set its priorities and so that the activities of the various authorities can yield positive results for the benefit of their citizens.

Peacekeeping operations are a valuable means whereby the United Nations assists in resolving international conflicts, but they all need to comply with the principles of consent among the parties involved in conflict, impartiality in executing mandates and the use of force solely in self-defence. Peacekeeping operations should be conducted strictly in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter, including unrestricted respect for State sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and the self-determination of peoples.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela strongly supports the efforts to secure stable and lasting peace in the Middle East and the formula of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders as the best way to achieve the goal of the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, thus enabling the Palestinian people to fully realize its legitimate and inalienable right to self-determination. In this regard, we believe that direct negotiations between the parties are the ideal means for overcoming the situations of violence that constantly affect the region, causing the loss of many innocent lives.

The Venezuelan Government is resolute in categorically condemning terrorism and rejecting any terrorist activity. It has reaffirmed its commitment in all international forums held on the subject of combating this problem effectively. The measures and norms involved in this policy are reflected in the various reports that we have submitted to the relevant committees of the Security Council as part of our commitment to this struggle.

In that regard, we take this opportunity to note once again the extradition request that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has made to the Government of the United States concerning the notorious international terrorist Luis Posada Carriles, currently at large in United States territory. We repeat our request that the Counter-Terrorism Committee consider and verify compliance by the United States with its obligations in the struggle against terrorism pursuant to Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), in the specific case of our request for the extradition of the terrorist Luis Posada Carriles.

Venezuela supports the early reform of the Security Council as an essential part of the United Nations reform process, in order to make it more representative of the international community and current geopolitical realities, thus giving it greater legitimacy and democratic meaning. We again stress the need for comprehensive reform, with expansion of the Council's membership in both categories, elimination of the veto and improvement of its working methods.

We support the idea that countries of the developing world belonging to the regions of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia, respectively, should become permanent members. Such an arrangement would give tangible form to a legitimate aspiration of peoples and countries that have been deprived and marginalized from exercising this responsibility for more than 60 years.

Our delegation believes that bringing new permanent members into the Council to represent the developing world is the right response in order to correct the current imbalances or asymmetries of power within that body. That is perfectly compatible with the general objective of encouraging the establishment of a multipolar system.

We also advocate an increase in the number of non-permanent members, bearing in mind the principle of equitable geographic distribution enshrined in the Charter.

Reform of the Council should not be limited to expansion of its membership; it should also address

other aspects, such as its agenda, working methods and decision-making processes. The Council must promote greater participation by non-member States in its work, improve its accountability and enhance the transparency of its work. Closed Council meetings should be kept to the minimum necessary, and there should be more public meetings and open debates so that the opinions of non-member States may be heard. Open debates should be real opportunities for the opinions and contributions of non-member States to be taken into account.

With regard to the agenda, the Council must avoid addressing issues that could involve usurping the competence of other United Nations bodies; it should concentrate on the problems that really concern threats to international peace and security. Moreover, the Council should invoke Chapter VII of the Charter only as a last resort, and should avoid having recourse to it to tackle issues that do not necessarily involve an immediate threat to international peace and security.

Sanctions are an exceptional measure, important in situations that might jeopardize international peace and security once diplomatic means and negotiations have been exhausted. We are concerned that the Council has sometimes adopted sanctions hastily in situations that do not necessarily represent genuine threats to international peace and security, resorting too soon to the provisions of Articles 41 and 42 of the Charter, before exhausting ways to settle disputes peacefully.

The indiscriminate use of sanctions can have a negative effect on the populations of the countries concerned, affecting their human rights, particularly in the area of health and nutrition, and undermining the physical integrity of women, children and the elderly. Therefore, the Council must avoid this harmful trend.

Venezuela believes that in the process of democratizing the United Nations it is vital to eliminate the right of the veto, because it is an anachronistic mechanism, contrary to the principle of the sovereign equality of States enshrined in the Charter as a fundamental norm governing peaceful coexistence among States. Recourse to it is a symbol of power belonging to a bygone age, and is contrary to multilateralism and the international cooperation that should prevail among Member States. Pending achievement of the ultimate objective of eliminating the right of the veto, ways must be found to limit and reduce its use, including mechanisms whereby the veto could be overridden.

The United Nations cannot continue to travel with a road map based on the past. Reform of the Security Council should be comprehensive. We need to ensure that the values of democracy and transparency govern the Organization's activities.

Our delegation regrets the limited progress made in the discussions of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council. We reaffirm our readiness to continue to participate constructively in the Working Group's deliberations at the sixty-second session, with a view to reaching agreements that will transform the Security Council in a positive manner.

Mr. Álvarez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): With regard to agenda item 9, concerning the report that the Security Council must submit to the General Assembly, we thank the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, President of the Security Council for this month, for introducing document A/62/2.

The report is clearly useful in many ways, in that it gives us an orderly compilation of the documentation issued by the Council in the period under consideration. But it still has some of the characteristics that this delegation has criticized in the past, such as a total lack of analysis of the events and situations reported on, resulting in a content that is almost statistical or bibliographic.

We acknowledge an improvement in the section covering the activities of the Council's subsidiary bodies, and in that connection we highlight progress with regard to sanctions and the procedures for listing and delisting persons and institutions by the competent bodies. While that is limited progress, on the whole it contributes to the transparency required for the effective fulfilment of such a delicate task.

However, we note that there has been no major progress in activities to improve the Council's working methods. Exchanges between the members of the Security Council and members of the General Assembly must be increased, particularly in the consultations on reform of the Council, and on increasing the number of its members, being held in

the Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly.

Uruguay reiterates that exchanging information and opinions between States is essential in any reform or improvement of the Council's working methods. Reform would involve, among other important issues, more active participation by troop-contributing countries in the decision-making of the Council on modifying the mandates of operations to which they contribute troops.

As our Foreign Minister stated on 2 October in the general debate (see A/62/PV.14), Uruguay hopes that in the current session we can, on the basis of consensus, advance the process of reforming the Security Council.

Uruguay supports the inclusion of Brazil as a permanent member, as well as India, Germany and Japan, and supports an increase in the number of non-permanent members. However, Uruguay maintains its opposition to extending the veto privilege to new members, whether directly or indirectly, by way of moratoriums or any other type of mechanism that would prolong such an extension. The inequalities generated by the veto privilege will not be corrected by creating new members with that privilege.

This position of principle dates back to the very creation of the Organization, when the delegation of Uruguay maintained that there should be no distinction, in the form of prerogatives or rights, between the Council's members.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): Reviewing the report on the work of the Security Council during the past year is an important occasion. We thank the authors of the objective and clear report and congratulate the Indonesian presidency on its comprehensive introduction of this year's report (A/62/2).

The report notes that the Council held 224 official meetings and 192 consultation meetings, and adopted 71 resolutions, 52 presidential statements and 47 press communiqués. There is no doubt that this increase in the Council's activity during the past year was due to the increasing number of conflicts and crises in various parts of the world, beginning with Africa and continuing through the Middle East, Asia and Europe.

That alone indicates that the Security Council has played a greater role than before. It also indicates the importance of our discussion today on developing the Council's work and reforming the Council in order to enhance its effectiveness, with a view to preserving international peace and security and seeking respect for the principles and provisions of international law.

Lebanon has a long history with the Security Council. In 1978 the Council adopted resolution 425 (1978) in the wake of the first Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon. That was followed by a series of resolutions dealing with the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, calling for the withdrawal of all foreign armies from Lebanon, and affirming its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and support for its legitimate authority. Since 2004, when resolution 1559 (2004) was adopted, Lebanon has been on the Council's agenda in biannual reports which follow the implementation of the resolution.

In 2005, after the crime of the assassination of the former Lebanese Prime Minister, Rafik Hariri, and his companions, the Council responded to the just request from Lebanon to identify the instigators and perpetrators of that terrorist crime and adopted resolution 1595 (2005), by which it established the International Independent Investigation Commission. That was followed by resolutions and statements that dealt responsibly with crimes targeting prominent intellectuals, politicians and free journalists, as well as other intimidation attempts targeting innocent civilians.

In addition, the Council took on the responsibility of the establishment of justice and adopted resolution 1757 (2007), with which it began the process of establishing a Special Tribunal for Lebanon of an international character. That was a clear message to the criminals — wherever and whoever they might be — that they would not enjoy impunity, and with it came the hope that this would serve as a deterrent shield protecting the future of Lebanon and the Lebanese from terrorists and terrorism so that my country, Lebanon, will remain an Arab beacon of democracy and liberty.

Israeli aggression once again targeted Lebanon in July 2006. Over a period of 34 days civilians suffered murder and displacement, and villages and infrastructure were affected by strikes and destruction. Southern Lebanon was sown with millions of cluster

bombs, which continue to claim victims, especially children.

The Security Council accordingly unanimously adopted resolution 1701 (2006) on 11 August 2006. Lebanon has committed itself to fully implementing its obligations under the resolution, especially in regard to sending the army to the south, while Israel continues to breach Lebanese sovereignty by land and air, and refuses to hand over maps for mines and cluster bombs left behind, not to mention its failure to withdraw from Lebanese territories.

Lebanon cannot but fully appreciate the important support given by the Security Council to its right and just cause. But, while discussing the effectiveness of the Security Council and how it may better maintain international peace and security, we must point out the risks resulting from the long-overdue implementation — or complete lack of implementation — of numerous resolutions. This affects the credibility of the Council, which is considered in more than one instance to apply a double standard to suit the balance of interests and objectives of major Powers.

Here I remind the Assembly that resolution 425 (1978), providing for Israel's immediate withdrawal from the Lebanese territories, remained dormant for 22 years before it was implemented, in substance, in 2000. In fact, its full implementation still requires Israel's withdrawal from the Shaba Farms and the al-Ghajar village in the south.

In this regard, I also remind the Assembly that 40 years have elapsed since the adoption of resolution 242 (1967), providing for the withdrawal of Israel from all the territories it occupied in 1967; this, while the Palestinian territories and the Syrian Golan remain under occupation.

The question of reforming the Security Council has been on the agenda of the General Assembly since it adopted, in 1993, resolution 48/26. That is nearly 15 years ago. The question of equitable representation on the Council and increase of its membership was already inscribed on the agenda in 1979.

The overwhelming majority of Member States agree on defining the many problems facing the Council and the need to modernize its structures and working methods. But they are not in agreement on effective solutions, especially in regard to the right of the exercise of the veto and the possibility of its restriction. That being said, they have begun to acknowledge the need to expand the Council to reflect, first, the changes in the membership of the United Nations, and, secondly, the geopolitical changes in the international arena. But what is more difficult is that numerous desired reforms that are right and enjoy support require amendment to some provisions of the Charter.

In order to break the vicious cycle and not have to return to the Assembly to take up, once again, the same discussion about the need for reform of the Security Council, we feel that we must immediately agree procedures that do not require a Charter amendment, such as enhancing the mechanisms of the Council and developing its working methods. This would not only secure transparency, allowing States to access information and documents and know the content of the work of the Council's committees, in order to enhance the principle of accountability, but would also allow countries to be privy to consultations and have their delegations heard on matters concerning them when decisions are made and resolutions are passed. We would thereby be taking a concrete first step towards the most important reform, one to which we aspire and which remains a goal from which we should never retreat: a Security Council that is more representative, democratic, effective and just.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Angola yesterday afternoon in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of African States. We also commend the President of the Security Council, the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, for introducing the annual report of the Council (A/62/2).

The annual report of the Security Council indicates the many areas all over the world, and particularly in Africa, where the Council remains engaged in helping to resolve conflict. The Security Council continues to play an important role in Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan, Burundi and Timor-Leste. It has stimulated constructive debate on important global issues, such as security sector reform, the role of women in peacekeeping operations and the relationship between the Council and regional organizations in terms of Chapter VIII of the Charter.

Mr. Soborun (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

At the same time, we must also, most unfortunately, acknowledge that the Security Council has not been successful in resolving some conflict situations, or has failed to intervene at all in others. The most serious threat to the credibility of the Council remains its inability, after 60 years, to play a meaningful role on the issue of Palestine.

It is our hope that the Council will stem the erosion of its credibility by transcending its divisions and the national interests of its members and uniformly discharging its Charter-based mandate to maintain international peace and security.

Membership of the Council confers a global responsibility, in that all of its members are entrusted with the task of helping to advance peace throughout the world. South Africa does not accept a status quo where some issues on the Council's agenda — such as counter-terrorism, non-proliferation, Kosovo and Western Sahara — are regarded as the preserve of some countries, to the exclusion of others.

On the vital issue of reform of the Security Council, let me reiterate my delegation's continued commitment to the African position. South Africa believes that meaningful reform should lead to the expansion of the Council's membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, in order to render it more democratic, legitimate, representative and responsive.

Our heads of State or Government resolved in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) and the 2005 World Summit Outcome to, inter alia, intensify their efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects as an essential element of overall efforts to reform the United Nations in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent, and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and legitimacy and the implementation of its decisions.

In that context, the General Assembly unanimously decided, in adopting on 17 September 2007 the draft decision recommended by its Open-ended Working Group, that

> "the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council should be considered during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly so that further concrete results may be achieved, including through intergovernmental negotiations, building on the progress achieved so far, particularly at the sixty-first session, as well as the positions of and proposals made by Member States". (*decision 61/561, para. d*)

To fulfil that long-outstanding mandate from our Heads of State and Government, my delegation joins others in calling on the President of the General Assembly to urgently initiate intergovernmental negotiations and determine, through an objective and transparent method, the elements that command the widest support, so that they can serve as the basis for such intergovernmental negotiations.

South Africa stands ready to negotiate in that process, based on our principled position, while being cognizant that all Member States and groups will have to demonstrate greater flexibility, political will and commitment if we are to collectively move the process of the reform of the Security Council forward.

We also call on the President of the General Assembly to periodically inform Member States about progress in achieving concrete results on the comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

Mr. Mavroyiannis (Cyprus): I thank Ambassador Natalegawa, Permanent Representative of Indonesia and President of the Security Council for this month, for his introduction yesterday morning of the report of the Council (A/62/2).

We appreciate the informative content of the report, as well as the actual work done by the Council during the reporting period. We consider, however, that the format of the report should have been geared towards facilitating the involvement of the wider membership of the Organization in the work of the Security Council. We consider that the primary objective of the report should be to associate the States that are not members of the Council in its substantive work, to assess the state of efforts in maintaining international peace and security, to evaluate the contribution of the Council in that endeavour and to decide how the General Assembly could make a concrete contribution in this field.

Without prejudice to the provisions of the Charter, the Council could interact more frequently and

systematically with the General Assembly, taking advantage of the Assembly's universal participation, in order to outline developments regarding its work so as to attract input that is pertinent to ongoing discussions. We consider that substantive input on the work of these two organs should be exchanged on a systematic basis and that expertise, lessons learned and intelligence should be transferred from one to the other.

Our goal is not to determine a hierarchical relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council. Rather than devoting a large part of our discussions to the respective competencies of the two organs by way of trying to define and defend each one's territory, it would be more productive to focus on the consolidation of a mutually reinforcing relationship, of synergy and cooperation, with a view to maximizing the potential and effectiveness of the Organization as a whole.

Another key element that we feel is missing from the report is the impact-assessment dimension — that is, whether and to what extent the Council's involvement in a given situation has improved it. That kind of assessment could serve as a departure point for the identification of Council practices that have proved constructive, and of others that have not.

I turn briefly to Security Council reform, and begin by noting the strong recurring themes that have dominated our discussions in that field. While it is true that many of the concerns of Member States with respect to the current Council set-up and working methods have not changed, we feel that the centre of our discussions has shifted and that that development must be taken into account.

After the work done during the sixty-first session and the more focused parameters of discussion that have emerged as a result of that work, we inevitably find ourselves in a more advanced phase of discussion. That new phase requires action, as opposed to the reiteration of positions.

Despite the specificities of the issue of Security Council reform, there is nothing that says that action cannot be successfully pursued with the means we have had at our disposal thus far. We consider that the success of a negotiation process hinges upon certain simple elements: the appointment of a coordinator, the presentation of a text that will serve as a basis for negotiation and a flexible methodology that will allow us to achieve results, rather than compel us to sacrifice substance for the sake of formalities.

I do not believe that we are facing unsolvable riddles as to how to move forward. It seems that States are willing to negotiate in an effort to try to crystallize the possible outcome of a reform process so that they can assess their options and make appropriate decisions. We take it for granted that all Member States are stakeholders in Security Council reform, because it is in the best interests of all that the Council functions as effectively as possible and enjoys the maximum degree of legitimacy.

Derivatively, other elements of reform that concern particular segments of the membership will be addressed through the satisfaction of the imperative objectives I have outlined. Components of reform, like accountability, transparency, inclusiveness, participation and efficiency, cannot be divorced from the more general context in which they would be best served, as each of them is a notion that is meaningful only once tested against and employed in the service of the cross-cutting notion of effectiveness.

Reform is not an end in itself. It is pursued because the quasi-totality of the membership share the view that there is scope for improving the Council's effectiveness, legitimacy and representativity, as well as the broader membership's access to and association with its work, with a view to enhancing its role as the international community's instrument par excellence in the service of maintaining and restoring international peace and security, in accordance with international law and the Charter. Only such improvements could serve as justification for Security Council reform, and we should not lose sight of this teleological dimension.

We do not question the perspective of any of the countries that seek enhanced participation, one way or another, and we are all fully aware of the various proposals that have surfaced in recent years. It is not feasible, however, in the face of the incompatibility of vocations, to have each one of those visions fully accomplished.

At the same time, we cannot ignore either the main representatives of the new geopolitical realities of our times or the need to afford a louder voice to countries representing developing countries and emerging actors that have been insufficiently accounted for until now. Drawing on the specific morphology of our own geographical region, I would

give the example of Egypt, a country with a multifaceted role and identity in Africa, the Mediterranean, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Middle East, the Arab world and the developing world. The same applies, of course, to other players from the known configurations of stakeholders.

However, despite the many concrete examples before us, we must not forget that everything is subordinate to the quality of the reform, and that the latter must be reached through the application of broader considerations and not through the extrapolation of specific demands. At this juncture, and without prejudice to the formal position of any stakeholder, we believe that there is a limited, yet meaningful, possibility of change if we focus on a modest and pragmatic, but provisional, reform that will improve the situation in the short and medium term, providing valuable lessons in terms of best practices along the way. Such a provisional arrangement should, of course, be revisited and reviewed after a predetermined period of time, so as not to pre-empt a more definitive reform when respective positions and the prevailing conditions might, hopefully, be more conducive to that.

Sir John Sawers (United Kingdom): We are grateful to the President of the General Assembly for convening this debate. I thank the Permanent Representative of Indonesia for his comments on the report of the Security Council (A/62/2), on behalf of all members of the Council. I also thank the Permanent Mission of China for leading the work on the Council's report with the Secretariat.

On the second item on the agenda of this joint debate, I welcome the opportunity to discuss reform of the Security Council. The United Kingdom shares the ambition expressed by previous speakers yesterday and today that we achieve concrete steps towards agreement on Security Council reform during the sixty-second session.

As the British Foreign Secretary said in this Hall during this year's general debate (see A/62/PV.9), international institutions need to reflect the world today, and not the world as it was. Reform of the United Nations in all its aspects, including the Security Council, is pivotal to progress. The status quo on United Nations reform is neither sustainable nor satisfactory. That includes the Security Council.

The United Kingdom therefore welcomes the prospect of intergovernmental negotiations, as agreed by the Assembly in September. These would build on developments realized under the stewardship of the former President of the General Assembly. We look forward to a detailed proposal from the current President of the Assembly in the weeks ahead on the basis for taking negotiations forward.

On the substance of reform, the United Kingdom seeks a Security Council that is more representative of today's world, yet no less effective or capable of taking the tough decisions needed in the face of the many threats to peace and international security that the Council deals with. To that end, we support permanent membership for Germany, Japan, India and Brazil, and permanent representation from Africa. As my Prime Minister, Mr. Gordon Brown, said in a speech in London last night,

> "Long-term, but now also interim, options must be examined to reform a United Nations Security Council — whose permanent members do not include Japan, India, Brazil, Germany, or any African country — to make the Council more representative, more credible and more effective".

The United Kingdom is not wedded to a single model of Council reform. We believe the membership should seek as much common ground as we can. That will require some flexibility. We should be open to considering an interim solution if that would break the deadlock.

We must also continue to improve the Council's working methods, in particular to make our work more efficient and more inclusive. This is an issue in which all Member States have an interest, and Council members have particular responsibility. We support the reforms that the Council agreed in 2006, and we underline the importance of their being more consistently implemented.

I conclude by reiterating the support of the United Kingdom for the Security Council reform process, and for the continuing leadership of the President of the General Assembly on this important issue. We hope to see progress in this session.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands): Security Council reform was one of the issues most referred to during the recent general debate. It has been with the

Assembly for the last 14 years, from the forty-eighth session to the sixty-second. My delegation is comforted by the current President's commitment to take concrete action on Security Council reform, having identified United Nations reform as one of his five priority areas of focus during his term in office. Solomon Islands, in that regard, stands ready to support Mr. Kerim's leadership in taking the matter to another level.

Before going further into the issue of Security Council reform, my delegation would like to thank Indonesia, in its capacity as President of the Security Council, for introducing the Council's annual report and for convening the open debate on the role of regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security last week.

Very briefly on the relationship between the Security Council and the regional and subregional organizations, as stated by my delegation during the Security Council's open debate, our leaders called at the 2005 Summit for a formal process between the Security Council and the regional and subregional organizations. That is important, given the fact that regional security mechanisms have gone farther into countries than our multilateral system. We must preserve the centrality of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. That is provided for under Article 54 of our Charter, but unfortunately is hardly observed.

Turning now to the reform of the Security Council, it is urgent to reform the Council. The Council is not only the principal organ of our multilateral system, but also the only body that defines and determines what constitutes a threat to international peace. Let me put a human face on it. Countries can call for security attention on their specific situation in this Assembly, but if they do not get support from our Council members, in particular the permanent five, they will not receive attention. Solomon Islands went through a conflict situation, but received no support despite registering the matter a couple of years back. It is therefore important to have a reformed Council that is more responsive to the realities of today — a Council that structurally respond to the pain and suffering of those going through conflicts.

It is in that connection that my delegation would like to use this opportunity to propose ways and means of advancing the issue into an intergovernmental negotiation phase. To begin with, allow me to make some comments on some elements that the negotiation process must have.

First, whatever negotiation model we adopt, it must be result-oriented and exercised in an open, transparent and all-inclusive manner.

Secondly, if we are to be successful, my delegation hopes that all groups and members approach the negotiation process with an open mind and flexibility. We must move beyond consultation, as suggested by some delegations, lest we begin restating our respective positions. Special efforts must be made to work towards a tangible, realistic and viable compromise that we can all live with.

Thirdly, our process must conform to the General Assembly's rules and procedures. My delegation makes special mention of that, as some delegations have proposed that the widest possible political agreement be reached. Solomon Islands feels, in that regard, that a two-thirds majority should be sufficient in effecting any decisions of importance if we are serious about making any real progress.

In taking the matter forward, Solomon Islands believes that we must build on the progress made Mr. Kerim's predecessor, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, and on Japan's work on the Security Council's working methods, amongst others, but we must also be innovative in having the intergovernmental negotiation process be result-oriented.

Solomon Islands wishes to propose that we could begin negotiations by examining the elements picked up by the facilitators. After 14 years of extensive consultations, my delegation feels that the time is now ripe to see what elements we should begin negotiations on. The various positions have been put forward by the various groups; those could be merged, where possible, into one text where there are commonalities. There are proposals by the Group of Four in document A/59/L.69, the Uniting for Consensus group in document A/59/L.68, and the African Group in document A/59/L.67, as well as the S-5 submission on working methods in document A/60/49.

We could also complement that with a questionnaire or a straw-poll process to be carried out by the President of the General Assembly in an effort to reach out to all members of the Assembly. Issues for negotiation, in my delegation's view, could be summarized as follows: the enlargement of the Council in both permanent and non-permanent seats; the Security Council's working methods; the right of veto; the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council; the relationship between the Security Council and the regional and subregional institutions; and, of course, the review process.

In conclusion, we have heard a number of proposals from various delegations to take us forward into an intergovernmental negotiation process. Solomon Islands looks to Mr. Kerim's leadership on the matter and once again assures him of its support. It is also our fervent hope that the President of the General Assembly may wish to consider having a periodic reporting system to the Assembly so as to ensure that the momentum he has started remains on track and is action-oriented.

Mr. Lidén (Sweden): It is time for a new momentum and a new effort to reform the Security Council and its composition, size and working methods. We need a Council that better reflects today's realities, with working methods that are transparent and open. We need more general trust in the United Nations system and a Security Council that offers a sense of inclusiveness and belonging to all of us, whoever we are and wherever we live.

It should be obvious that the regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America have to be better represented, and that all countries should have a fair chance to serve on the Council from time to time. For the United Nations to be relevant on issues of security, we need a Security Council that not only enjoys the respect of Member States and their populations, but is also perceived as fair and legitimate.

As new threats and challenges appear, the United Nations has to adapt. We want to see a United Nations that is relevant, legitimate, effective and capable of dealing with emerging threats to our common security. Reform of the Security Council is, in our view, long overdue, and the consultations on that issue that we have seen so far have not delivered any substantial results. We now need to start result-oriented intergovernmental negotiations to bring the process forward.

As previously stated, Sweden is open to the idea of an enlargement of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. However, we should seek the broadest possible agreement. That is necessary if the Council is to be perceived as legitimate and to avoid new divisions and frustrations that could harm our work in the United Nations for a long time to come.

We also wish to repeat that the Security Council must be an effective body able to act swiftly when needed. We therefore strongly believe that the veto power should not be extended. Instead, we would like to see a veto-free culture be promoted in the Council. In our view, any reform should be the subject of a recurrent and effective review mechanism. A decision to accept new permanent members on the Council should, in our view, not be easy to change, but we should avoid decisions which are irreversible for all time to come. We also need to be able to open up to further changes in the future. As the world changes, the Security Council has to be able to change.

If we are not ready to agree on such a more long-term reform, one possibility could be to look at an interim or transitional solution that could eventually lead to a more permanent arrangement. Moreover, as we have stated before, we believe that the Security Council's working methods should be made more open and transparent. We would like to see that issue advanced further, even without immediate agreement on the composition of the Council.

As we enter the intergovernmental negotiations, we all need to be creative, have an open mind and show flexibility. For its part, Sweden is ready to discuss new ideas and will continue to engage actively in a constructive dialogue on how to reform the Security Council.

Mr. Sareer (Maldives): At the outset, my delegation would like to join previous speakers in expressing our appreciation to the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Natalegawa, Permanent Representative of Indonesia, for his presentation of the annual report of the Council, covering the period from 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007 (A/62/2). We would also like to thank the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, for the exemplary leadership she

demonstrated as the Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council during the previous session. Our deep gratitude also goes to the tedious work undertaken by the facilitators appointed by her to assist the process.

Maldives remains convinced that the United Nations is the only organization that is capable of creating a more peaceful and prosperous world for humanity. The principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations are as relevant and valid today as they were when formulated in 1946, but the challenges that confront the Organization in this globalized world are surely not the same as when it was created six decades ago.

Reforming and restructuring the Organization to effectively address those challenges, therefore, remains a major hurdle to cross. While we acknowledge with satisfaction the numerous reforms that have already been implemented over the past few years, it is disappointing to note that the proposed reforms of the Security Council, the principal organ entrusted with the primary task of maintaining international peace and security, continue to elude us without any tangible results.

My delegation sincerely believes that reforming the Security Council remains central and should become part and parcel of the entire United Nations reform process if the United Nations is to remain a credible and effective Organization. The Council must be reformed to reflect the geopolitical realities of the modern world. While we recognize the difficulties we face, we sincerely believe that the reforms should be comprehensive and include the expansion of its membership in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories, the issue of veto, and its decision-making process. Similarly, the issues relating to the working methods and their transparency, and the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly are equally important areas that need to be addressed in a comprehensive manner.

Maldives is convinced that any expansion of the Security Council should reflect the growth of United Nations membership and its present cultural diversity. We would like to see the process result in reform that would make the Security Council more representative, democratic and transparent. We share the view that reforms of the Council should become an integral part of the United Nations reform process and that maintaining the status quo is not acceptable. We value the importance of the need to enhance Member States' access to the Council, both in terms of increasing their chances to serve as members and, while not members, to increase their involvement in the Council's work. We also welcome the Working Group's recommendation that any enlargement should address the underrepresentation of developing countries as well as small States.

Security priorities may vary from State to State. For the Maldives and many other small, low-lying island States in the world, peace and security are derived not only from the absence of war or conflicts. The threats posed by global climate change and related consequences have now become a threat that is linked directly to the sheer survival of some of those small States. In our view, the issue of climate change is intrinsically an issue of international peace and security that requires the urgent and paramount attention of all the organs of the Organization, including the Security Council.

In that regard, my delegation appreciates the historic step taken by the Security Council in convening, on 17 April 2007, the first-ever debate exploring the potential impacts of climate change on international peace and security. Maldives consider that to be an important step in the right direction and we believe that close cooperation and coordination among all principal organs are indispensable in order to enable the Organization to remain relevant and capable of meeting such new and emerging threats and challenges.

Before I conclude, allow me to reiterate our firm belief that the lack of common ground on some of the major aspects of the Council reforms should not be used as an excuse for no action. Our decision to support the G-4 proposals is based primarily on our conviction that no action would be counterproductive to the Organization. We sincerely believe that we should proceed with the enlargement of the membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, and include in that enlargement countries such as Japan, India and other Member States that have proved their commitment and capacity to serve as permanent members and would represent the wider membership of the present-day United Nations. After all, the aim of the reform process is the enhancement of the credibility, legitimacy and universal character of the Organization.

As a responsible member of the international community, I assure the Assembly that the Maldives will continue to play its role in upholding and promoting the objectives of the United Nations.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan): At the outset, I would like to thank the Security Council and the Secretariat for the comprehensive report on the work of the Council during the past year, and in particular Ambassador Marty Natalegawa of Indonesia, the current President of the Council, for introducing the Security Council's report (A/62/2).

During the past year, the Security Council has made a significant contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security, although not all that was planned has been achieved so far. We hope that the Council will continue energetically considering the urgent issues on its agenda and find new approaches and ways to resolve them.

We believe that some matters brought to the attention of the Security Council through communications of Member States, but not discussed at meetings of the Council during the period covered, could be considered in the future, taking into account their importance and relevance to the activity of the Council in preserving peace and security.

We highly appreciate the integrated measures of the Organization to settle the situations in the Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Afghanistan, Kosovo, the Middle East and other topical issues of world security.

The lack of international consensus on the issue of non-proliferation has led to a dramatic weakening of the collective security system. We believe that the Council should continue its focus on that issue and consider new approaches to ensure real non-proliferation in a new environment. In that regard, Kazakhstan proposes that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons be adapted to the new realities.

The United Nations continues to be at the forefront of the battle against international terrorism. My delegation would like to express its appreciation to Ambassador Ricardo Alberto Arias of Panama, the current Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), for his leadership in steering the activities of the Committee.

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted in September 2006 as resolution 60/288, outlined the fact that a consistent and comprehensive response to terrorism would be greatly enhanced by the involvement of civil society and the private sector. Hence, we call on the CTC to elaborate specific and comprehensive recommendations for the development of partnerships among Government, the private sector and civil society in combating terrorism.

Kazakhstan is fully committed to supporting the activities of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban, and commends its work under the chairmanship of Ambassador Johan Verbeke. A wide range of issues related to strengthening cooperation in combating terrorism in the region of Central Asia were discussed during his visit to Kazakhstan in October 2007. My Government will continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and give all possible support to that important body.

During the past year, there has been a surge in the demand for United Nations conflict-prevention and management, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Recognizing the importance of gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations, we are particularly pleased with the Council's ongoing attention to the issue of women, peace and security.

We recognize the need to develop close cooperation between the Security Council, Member States and regional arrangements in the search for ways and means to ensure effective responses to emerging complex conflict situations when measures to keep peace and promote development often have to be taken simultaneously. In that context, we appreciate the establishment at Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, and express our readiness to closely cooperate with the Centre and our neighbours in order to strengthen regional capacities for conflict prevention.

One of the urgent issues on the agenda of the United Nations is reform of the Security Council, which bears responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We are convinced that the momentum generated by the informal consultations in the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform during the sixty-first session should be maintained, and we call on the President of the General

Assembly to continue those consultations during the current session with a view to commencing intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. We have to find an optimal solution; if we do not, we will burden the next generation with that complicated issue. The time we have spent on this question is already equal to the age of a teenager.

Kazakhstan understands that there is general agreement among Member States on the need to reform the Security Council. The position of Kazakhstan on that issue has been expressed on repeated occasions. We share the perception of the urgency of a changed Security Council, which needs to be more representative, more legitimate, more transparent and more efficient. Kazakhstan holds the view that, in its current form, the Security Council no longer reflects the realities of our world. We believe that equitable representation of Member States in the Security Council could strengthen its ability to effectively face the challenges of the twenty-first century and to play its role in the settlement of crisis situations.

The Council should be revitalized by the addition of new permanent and non-permanent members. We stand for the expansion of the Security Council on the basis of equitable geographic representation and respect for the sovereign equality of all Member States. Asia, Africa and Latin America should have a wider representation in the Security Council and should be directly involved in the search for solutions to the important problems facing the international community.

Since becoming a Member of the United Nations in 1992, Kazakhstan has served in a number of important bodies of the Organization, but not in the Security Council. During the 15 years of its United Nations membership, Kazakhstan has made an important contribution to international peace and security, sustainable development and environmental agenda. The renunciation of nuclear weapons, the adoption of confidence-building measures in Asia, the facilitation of integration processes in Eurasia, the advancement of the interests of landlocked countries and the promotion of a dialogue between civilizations and religions represent just a sample of the steps taken by my country in the spirit of the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

We are confident of our capacity to contribute to the work of the Council and announced 10 years ago our candidature for a non-permanent seat for the period 2011-2012. It is our hope that the General Assembly will support Kazakhstan's candidacy during the elections in 2010. We look forward to working closely with the Security Council and to participating actively in all its efforts to meet the global need for peace.

Mr. Abdulatif (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to extend my thanks to the President of the Security Council, the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, who briefed us on the Council's activities during the sixtieth and the sixty-first sessions.

I also wish to align myself with the statement made by the representative of Angola on behalf of the African Group.

The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document called for tangible reform of the organs of the United Nations to enable it to achieve the purposes and principles for which it was established. It stressed, in particular, speedy reform of the Security Council in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent and thus to further enhance its effectiveness, its legitimacy and the implementation of its resolutions.

Although some progress has been achieved in reforming several United Nations bodies, the issue of Security Council reform before the United Nations remains an intractable matter for the international community. We still urgently need to address the issue of how to make the Security Council more balanced in terms of ensuring equitable regional representation, membership, and improved working methods. That includes an examination of the privilege of the veto power and preventing the Security Council's encroachment on the competencies of other United Nations organs. Those issues fundamentally touch the very heart of the overall United Nations reform process.

My country's delegation appreciates the consultations that occurred within the framework of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council. It also highly appreciates the strenuous efforts exerted personally by the previous President of the General Assembly, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, and the facilitators appointed by her, and the resulting ideas and

suggestions. Those were included in the Working Group report endorsed by the General Assembly on 14 September 2007, and the most important among those ideas and suggestions states that additional practical steps should be taken, including by means of intergovernmental negotiations.

My country's delegation wishes to underline the fact that the mandate of those negotiations, if held, must have as a starting point the discussions that occurred during the General Assembly's previous session, in addition to the positions of the Member States and the suggestions they have put forward. A realistic evaluation of the consultations and delegations' differing points of view vis-à-vis Security Council reform all require us to consider steps that will push the ongoing endeavours forward and bring that process, which has extended for many years, to an end.

Africa is the continent that has been most adversely affected by measures enacted after the Second World War. Those include the establishment of the Security Council, which was achieved in the absence of most African countries, which were suffering under colonialism and racism. Today, African countries constitute more than a quarter of the States Members of the United Nations. It is imperative that Africa be treated with justice and that its rights be recognized, thereby undoing the historical wrongs inflicted upon it and ending its marginalization by granting it just and fair representation in the Security Council, including the permanent membership that other continents enjoy.

My country's delegation therefore underlines the common African position calling for Africa to be granted two permanent seats on the Security Council, with the right of veto, and five non-permanent seats. That position emerged in the Ezulwini Consensus and was reiterated at the fifth African Union summit conference held in Sirte on 4 and 5 July 2005, as well as at subsequent summits.

With regard to improving the working methods of the Security Council, my delegation underlines the fact that any reform process of the Council, be it temporary or permanent, partial or complete, will be of no significance if the issue of the right of veto is not addressed. That right has been misused in so many cases at the expense of just causes and the rights of vulnerable peoples, thereby damaging the credibility of the Security Council in particular and of the United Nations in general. That fact alone justifies efforts to abrogate or at least limit that privilege.

No reform process will be of any use if it does not include reactivating the role of the General Assembly and preventing the Security Council from encroaching on the General Assembly's mandate, as defined in the Charter. It has become essential for the General Assembly to take urgent action in that regard. We also call for attention to be paid to the contents of the Security Council's reports. They do not provide a clear picture of what occurs in the Council or demonstrate its commitment to abide by the General Assembly's resolutions, especially in the light of the reports' narrative aspects, which analyse considerations on the basis of the decisions adopted and the positions taken by countries, especially those of the permanent members. Similarly, attention must be given to the reasons that prevent the Council from taking strong positions on important issues related to international peace and security.

We continue to hope that the efforts in the coming phase will result in an approach that addresses the deep and radical reform that the Council requires, and not in approaches that are unable to deliver the changes necessary to the Security Council's balance and performance. The next phase will require serious political will and an objective and deep consideration of what is needed to achieve the desired balance in the Security Council. We wish to underline my delegation's full readiness to cooperate in dealing once again with this important subject.

Mr. Yousfi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): May I first thank Ambassador Marty Natalegawa, Permanent Representative of Indonesia, for his presentation of the report of the Security Council for the review period ending on 31 July 2007.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate the new members elected to the Council — the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Burkina Faso, Viet Nam, Croatia and Costa Rica.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola on behalf of the African Group.

We note once again that the Security Council's report continues to suffer from the same insufficiencies referred to in considerations of previous reports, and that there is clearly no desire on the Council's part to

take into consideration the observations and expectations of Member States that wish to see improvement in both the contents and presentation of the report. My delegation wishes to point out in particular that the Security Council continues to disregard the General Assembly's repeated requests to submit to it special reports pursuant to paragraph 1 of Article 15 and paragraph 3 of Article 24 of the Charter, just as it ignores decisions adopted in Assembly resolutions on its revitalization, which are designed to improve coordination and cooperation among the principal organs.

On reading the report, we note that the Council's activities continue to follow two tracks. On the one hand, the Council has an extremely busy agenda, as demonstrated by the number of meetings held and decisions adopted during the period under review. On the other hand, there is clearly an ongoing impulse to expand the Council's field of competence, to the detriment of the prerogatives of the other principal organs, in pursuit of an abusive and therefore disputed interpretation of the concept of threats to international peace and security. The first trend is not necessarily proof of effectiveness, whereas the second gives rise to valid concerns within the General Assembly in that it demonstrates a determination to address new threats to our collective security in an elitist and non-democratic manner.

While my delegation is prepared to acknowledge that there may be areas in which the General Assembly's concerns in the face of the emergence of new types of threats are shared by the Security Council, we would stress that the nature of such threats is the perfect validation of the expression of the co-responsibility of all members of the international community through a joint approach to such problems among the principal organs. In that regard, my delegation deplores the Security Council's ongoing and evident reluctance to address the idea of coordination, including where the Charter explicitly identifies an area as falling within the common purview of the General Assembly and the Security Council, such as the appointment of the Secretary-General.

At the sixty-first session, Member States adopted by consensus the recommendations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council (decision 61/561), thereby extending the Working Group's mandate to the sixty-second session and calling for an intergovernmental negotiating process with a view to achieving tangible results based on the report of the facilitators and the positions and proposals set forth by Member States. Those recommendations provide valuable guidelines for both the framework and the contents of the negotiations.

How, then, should we proceed in future? First, we believe that the common sense of the urgent need to make the Security Council more representative and democratic should not be confused with haste to launch intergovernmental negotiations. From our perspective, the rapid onset of negotiations is less important than meeting the requirements necessary to their success.

Secondly, the negotiating framework should be open-ended, transparent and inclusive. In our view, only the framework of the Open-ended Working Group can satisfy such requirements. At this stage, any other restricted mechanism would fuel suspicions and should be avoided. If negotiations are to be held and evolve in a satisfactory manner, we trust in the leadership of the President of the General Assembly to iron out any temporary difficulties.

Thirdly, negotiations must begin on the basis of the initial positions of every group and existing proposals. It would not be productive to require any State or group of States to abandon its initial position as a prerequisite to launching the negotiations. Any solution — be it definitive, intermediate or temporary — that might enjoy the broadest possible support within the General Assembly should constitute the outcome of negotiations and not their point of departure.

Fourthly, the time remaining before the conclusion of the sixty-second session is sufficient and reasonable for conducting calm negotiations, with no need to impose any artificial deadline.

Fifthly, among the preconditions for the commencement of negotiations, we believe that Member States must make an unequivocal commitment to the President of the General Assembly not to develop any parallel process other than that involving the submission of draft resolutions or the framework of restricted negotiations.

Sixthly, when negotiations begin, Algeria intends to play an active role therein on the basis of the

common African position defined in the Ezulwini Consensus and confirmed at the African summit in Sirte, and is convinced of the rightness and legitimacy of that position.

Mrs. Asmadi (Indonesia): Let me begin by expressing our gratitude to the President of the General Assembly for convening this very important joint debate.

My delegation's deep appreciation also goes to his predecessor, Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, for her efforts in trying to bring Member States together on the very difficult question of Security Council reform. We are confident that the work done will be carried forward effectively under Mr. Kerim's able guidance.

My delegation has spoken on the report of the Security Council on behalf of the Council. We would like to focus now, in our national capacity, on certain aspects pertaining to the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

The United Nations is at a critical juncture in its history. It would not be wrong to say that the world is passing through one of its most turbulent and uncertain periods. Geopolitical upheavals, imbalanced situations in the economic and social fields, pockets of poverty, and climate change confront the global citizenry with most serious questions. A judicious and equitable world order would help us properly to tackle those and other challenges of collective concern.

As highlighted by the Secretary-General, "[t]he quest for a more peaceful and secure world is one of the main pillars of the work of the Organization" (*A/61/1, para. 42*). The Security Council, as the principal organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, is required to be fully equipped to tackle the associated challenges of the twenty-first century. It can do so effectively only if its composition and functioning respond to the realities of today and if it is duly mindful of the interests of developing countries, in which the majority of the world's people reside.

The Council's legitimacy is essential. It is a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. The Council represents the collective voice of Members and not just their individual interests. Its legitimacy comes not only from the power that each State member of the Council possesses, but also from the legitimacy of the collective will and from Charter-based collective understandings of the widest possible membership.

Rather, the Council will need to be restructured based on the paradigm of the equality of all States, whereby States are potentially selected from their respected regions. Unless that is manifested through a fair reform of the Council, it will be difficult to achieve legitimacy for that crucial organ.

The trust and respect of the peoples of the world are absolutely vital for the Council in the successful exercise of its mandate. With reform, future decisions of the Council should inspire a greater sense of collectiveness. They should better reflect positions based on the collective interests of States, rather than on certain national interests of its members. In that context, a greater role for the regional approach may be an interesting idea to be further explored.

Indonesia regards the comprehensive reform of the Security Council's membership and its working methods as fundamental to bolstering the dynamic of peaceful inter-State relations, as well as an integral feature of the broader United Nations reform process. We are willing to consider different proposals on the Council's reform so long as they are embedded in the principles of democracy, accountability and fairness, and lead to the strengthening of the representation of the developing countries. We believe that the rich civilizational diversity of our world should also be seen clearly in the constitution of the reformed Council.

There needs to be a substantive change in the long-standing key issues of categories of membership, country representation criteria, veto, transparency, working methods and balanced relations with the other principal organs of the United Nations.

Considerable good work was accomplished on those issues at the previous session of the General Assembly. The Open-ended Working Group on Council reform and all the facilitators appointed by the President of the General Assembly did an exemplary job in difficult circumstances. We must maintain the generated momentum and build on the work done.

In our view, the report contained in document A/61/47 presents a balanced reflection of the different opinions among the General Assembly's membership. The report lays down several concrete options. Those may not be ideal for all of us; nonetheless, they provide us with some forward-looking and workable

ideas, given the present diversity in delegations' positions.

We support the concept of an intermediary approach with a prior agreed review mechanism, as contained in the report. That approach enjoys the most support among Members. However, we feel that there should be further consultations on those critical matters to minimize differences. We need to garner the widest possible agreement, since a clear ownership of the Council's reform is crucial to the subsequent steps that would ultimately lead to amending the Charter. In that regard, the General Assembly, as the chief deliberative and decision-making organ of the United Nations, should continue to act as the fulcrum of all our activities to achieve Council reform.

We hope that Member States will intensify their efforts to attain the much-needed reform. Indonesia reiterates its readiness to cooperate with delegations in working to achieve a comprehensive and robust reform of the Council.

Mr. Ali (Malaysia): My delegation is pleased to participate in this joint debate on agenda items 9 and 122.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the President of the Security Council for the month of November, Ambassador Marty Natalegawa of Indonesia, for presenting to the General Assembly the annual report of the Security Council for the period 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007, as contained in document A/62/2.

My delegation appreciates the vital contribution and pivotal role of the Security Council in the maintenance of global peace and security. The consideration of the annual report of the Security Council by the General Assembly is in keeping with Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, and provides an opportunity for the wider membership of the Organization to assess the work and performance of the Council, including its efficiency, effectiveness and relevance. The report also contributes to transparency in the work of the Council, which should be the cornerstone of the working methods of the Council.

The report provides factual accounts of how the Council took action on various issues before it. While my delegation welcomes that factual reporting, it lacks real value in helping us to consider the actual work of the Council in the maintenance of peace and security. We are of the view that the report of the Council should be more substantive and analytical. It should, inter alia, provide justification and rationales behind major actions taken by the Council. It is important for the wider membership of the United Nations to be apprised of the decisions of the Council on matters of international peace and security, as such decisions and actions also have an impact on Members. That would also be in line with promoting greater transparency and accountability in the work of the Council.

We are pleased to note that the Council addressed a wide range of issues relating to peace and security during the period under review, which reaffirms the trend in recent years of an increase in the volume and scope of the activities of the Council. Over the period reported, we note also that the Council held a total of 224 formal meetings, adopted 71 resolutions and issued 52 presidential statements.

Conflicts and instability in Africa continue to be at the forefront of the Council's agenda, though other issues also remained high on the agenda for the Council's consideration. We commend the tireless effort of the Council in maintaining peace and security, particularly in conflict-affected regions and areas. Malaysia reaffirms its commitment to working with the Council in that regard.

The Malaysian delegation welcomes the Council's continued consideration of the question of Palestine and the Middle East through its monthly briefings, as well as in open debates. We see much value in that, especially since the question of Palestine remains the only issue that the Council has continued to grapple with for more than 40 years. Despite the Council's monthly consideration of that matter, it has not had a significant impact on the situation on the ground. Violence continues unabated, while the deaths of civilians and the destruction of their homes and infrastructure continue to mount, particularly on the Palestinian side.

While the Council is seen to be authoritative and effective on situations in other parts of the world, unfortunately the contrary could be said with regard to the Palestinian issue. The report of the Security Council shows the lack of substantive action by the Council on that important matter. The Council must improve and maintain its credibility by enforcing its authority in that question, and must be seen to

discharge its responsibilities in maintaining peace and security in the region. We are confident that the Council will resist any attempt by any parties to influence it to act contrary to that objective.

The practice of holding open meetings of the Council provides an opportunity to the wider membership of the United Nations to participate in the Council's work. Malaysia also agrees that the holding of thematic discussions is useful to improving the effectiveness of the Council. We consider thematic discussions and open debates to be avenues for allowing Council members and the wider membership of the United Nations to offer views and suggestions on issues directly related to the work of the Council. We are confident that the contributions of non-members of the Security Council to those debates are useful inputs to the Council.

While welcoming the convening of thematic debates and given the increasing workload of the Council, we believe that the Council should be more selective and should focus on achieving concrete results that would have an impact on the performance not only of the Council itself, but also of the United Nations at large. We are also of the view that the outcomes of thematic discussions in the Council should be submitted as reports to the General Assembly, consistent with Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter.

Turning to agenda item 122, my delegation agrees with the prevailing view that the United Nations, including the Security Council, needs to be reformed in a comprehensive manner in terms of its working methods and of expansion of its membership to make it more legitimate, representative, democratic and transparent. Our discussions at the previous session have shown that there is great interest among Member States in seeing the Council reformed in a comprehensive manner. Any reform of the United Nations would not be complete without the long-overdue reform of the Security Council.

In that regard, we would like to thank Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, for her efforts to reinvigorate the debate on Council reform. The discussions we had last session clearly showed an emerging consensus. The only difference, however, appears to be in the approach.

My delegation endorses a transitional approach, whereby we would see some tangible results in our deliberations. Such an approach, however, should not distract us from the ultimate goal of comprehensive Council reform. We see much value in taking smaller steps to reach our intended destination, rather than a risky giant leap that would cause us to fall. A mid-term assessment or a review mechanism would be crucial for us to assess our progress, as it would allow us to further improve and address any shortcomings. That, to my delegation, also provides a safeguard for all of us, as it would keep the discussion on Council reform going. We must all bear in mind that reform is an ongoing process and must not be seen as an endgame in itself. In that regard, we look forward to future negotiations to be held at the intergovernmental level in an open, transparent and inclusive manner.

Mr. Maema (Lesotho): At the outset, let me express my gratitude to the President of the Security Council for this month, Mr. Marty Natalegawa, Permanent Representative of Indonesia, for his informative presentation of the annual report on the work of the Security Council.

The delegation of Lesotho aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Angola on behalf of the African Group.

My delegation has noted with great appreciation the increase in the number of open and public debates held by the Security Council during the reporting period. We see that as a positive measure that the Council took to improve its transparency as well as its effectiveness. However, such a measure does not respond to the call that was made to the Council by world leaders at the 2005 World Summit to enhance its accountability to the entire membership of the United Nations. In our view, the effectiveness and transparency of the Council would be enhanced by the presentation to the General Assembly of reports that are more informative, particularly with regard to decisions taken by the Council. In addition, my delegation maintains the view that, to enhance its effectiveness, the Security Council should maintain a clear focus only on those issues that fall within its mandate and avoid encroaching on those issues that fall within the mandates of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

The issue of the working methods of the Security Council is of great importance to my delegation. We appreciate the proposal made by the group of five small nations (S-5) in that regard. We recognize that it

seeks to ensure better access to the work of the Council for those States that are not members, particularly developing countries. Accordingly, my delegation remains convinced that the working methods are an essential and integral part of Security Council reform and as such should remain part of the reform package. We assert that access to the work of the Council per se would not address the issue of the legitimacy of the decisions of the Council.

As the report of Security Council that is now under consideration has highlighted, in the past year, as in previous years, the Security Council focused mostly on Africa, and yet Africa's representation in the Security Council does not even come close to reflecting the continent's interests and perceptions. That is the unacceptable status quo that the common African Position, as contained in the Ezulwini Consensus and in the Sirte Declaration, seeks to address. Indeed, as has been attested to by many, the common African Position is driven not by the interests of one country, but by a strong desire to empower a region facing the most crises relating to international peace and security.

Deliberations in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council have continued for more than a decade without any concrete results. We are grateful that, during the sixty-first session, the President of the General Assembly, Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, with her able leadership and skill, was able to rekindle the process. Allow me at this juncture to commend the five facilitators and the two ambassadors who assisted President Al Khalifa in conducting fruitful consultations that were able to stimulate active discussions on that important issue.

As we move into the next phase, my delegation wishes to pledge its full support and cooperation to the President of the General Assembly. It is our fervent hope that the process will be inclusive, transparent and results-oriented. We recall that, at the 2005 World Summit, the heads of State and Government stressed the need for the urgent reform of the Council and for the Council to be broadly representative and more legitimate.

Mr. Khazaee (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I wish to extend our appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for convening this joint debate and to thank the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, the President of the Security Council, for presenting the annual report of the Council to the General Assembly today.

The report at hand contains certain information on the work of the Council, but falls short of referring to the cases in which the Council failed to take action on situations that required its attention and intervention. We have noted that the format of the present report is similar to that of last year and has yet to fully meet the expectations of the States members of the General Assembly.

Apart from a few steps taken in the past several years, the working methods of the Council have not undergone major improvements, despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of the Member States have been calling for genuine transparency and real changes in the Council's working methods and decision-making processes for the past several decades.

The failure of the Council to improve its image and credibility in the eyes of the general membership, as well as international public opinion, lies mostly in the manner in which it functions. There have been plenty of instances when the Council has failed to honour its responsibility as regards the rights of non-members. They include, among others, refusing to allow non-Council members to participate in discussions on matters affecting them, in total disregard of Article 31 of the Charter; denying the right of the concerned countries to brief the Council on their positions on issues having a direct effect on their national interest; pursuing a trend of selective notification of meetings of the Council; failing to convene daily briefings; and restricting the participation of the general membership in some open debates.

Moreover, disturbing trends, such as quick and unnecessary resort to Chapter VII of the Charter and the threat or use of sanctions in cases in which no action has even been necessary, have all adversely affected the credibility and legitimacy of the Council. More alarming are the various cases in which certain permanent members of the Council have attempted to downgrade that body into a mere tool of their foreign policy.

Indeed, impartiality, transparency and fairness are key premises on which the Security Council should base its approach in discharging its Charter-mandated

responsibilities. Yet, missing from many of the Council's approaches and decisions are exactly the same essential and key factors. To increase the transparency of its work and improve its working methods, the Council should take into serious consideration the relevant provisions of the Charter, as well as the resolutions that clarify its relationship with the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations.

In recent years, we have witnessed the increasing trend of the Council's encroachment on the prerogatives of other main organs of the United Nations, particularly those of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary bodies. Despite the rejection of that trend by the great majority of Member States, we nevertheless saw the Council enter a new and alarming phase, and attempts made to shift issues on the agenda of the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council to the Security Council, during the period under review. For us, as for many other Member States, that trend is unacceptable and such attempts should be checked and reversed.

Norm-setting and law-making by the Security Council are yet another increasing trend that runs counter to the letter and spirit of the United Nations Charter. In accordance with the Charter, the General Assembly, as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations — and not the Security Council — is primarily entrusted with the task of the progressive development and codification of international law.

Equally disturbing is the fact that, during the period under review, the Council has been, on the one hand, rendered incapacitated in certain cases where action has been really and urgently needed, such as the Israeli atrocities against the Palestinian, Lebanese and other peoples in the region, while, on the other, it has been pushed to take unwarranted and unlawful action on issues that posed no threat to international peace and security and presented no reason for the Council to be involved.

The period under review is marked by the continued inaction of the Council with regard to the Zionist regime's crimes against the Palestinian people, and yet again another draft resolution in that regard was vetoed by the United States. Furthermore, the Council was prevented from considering, let alone taking any action on the acknowledgement by the Israeli regime's Prime Minister that his regime possesses nuclear weapons, while the said regime's nuclear arsenal poses one of the most serious threats to regional and international peace and security, and the international community expected and continues to expect the Council to take appropriate action in that regard.

The Security Council also failed to address the abduction by the United States of five Iranian consulate officers in Erbil, Iraq, although that was a flagrant violation of some of the most fundamental provisions of international law.

In the period under review, in a politically-motivated move orchestrated by a few of its permanent members, the Security Council took unlawful, unnecessary and unjustifiable action in adopting resolutions against the Islamic Republic of Iran over its peaceful nuclear programme, which presents no threat to international peace and security. Indeed, the Council's actions were taken against the Iranian nation only because it has decided to exercise its inalienable right to peaceful uses of nuclear technology, as enshrined in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Such actions were taken despite Iran's full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the latter's assertion that it has not seen any indication of diversion in Iran's peaceful nuclear programme.

We are of the view that the Council's actions on Iran's peaceful nuclear programme are unlawful and run counter to the provisions of the United Nations Charter. They are unlawful because, first and foremost, Iran's nuclear programme is absolutely peaceful; it cannot be characterized as a threat to peace by any stretch of law, fact or logic and therefore does not fall within the Council's purview. Moreover, In accordance with article 24 of the Charter, the Council should act on behalf of the United Nations Member States. However, with regard to Iran's peaceful nuclear programme, not only has the Council not been acting on behalf of the international community, but it has acted contrary to the positions of the overwhelming majority of Member States, including the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement and the member countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which have clearly supported Iran's right to peaceful nuclear technology and emphasized that the

IAEA is the sole competent body to deal with such issues.

Therefore, there is every reason to assert that Iran's peaceful nuclear programme does not fall within the purview of the Security Council, and the referral of that issue to the Security Council, as well as the Council's subsequent actions in that regard, fail to meet the minimum standards of legality. In fact, the right path for the issue goes through dialogue and technical elaboration within its proper and legal context, which is the framework of the IAEA.

Before concluding, I wish to briefly address the issue of the reform of the Security Council. We express our appreciation to the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session and to the facilitators appointed by her for their tireless efforts to move the reform process and the work of the Working Group on the reform of the Security Council forward. We will continue to actively support the efforts of the current President of the General Assembly in that respect at this session, and hope that those efforts will lead to concrete steps with regard to the long-awaited reform of the Security Council.

Clearly, despite the extensive debates in the Open-ended Working Group over the past 14 years, no significant progress has been made on the substantive aspects of the Council's reform, such as its size and composition, as well as the veto power. We concur with the view that the composition of the Security Council does not represent the realities of the world today, and that this issue should be thoroughly addressed and resolved in any meaningful reform of the United Nations. In our view, a meaningful reform of the Council will be possible only by creating a situation in which the question of underrepresentation of developing countries in the Council is seriously dealt with and the question of representation for nearly 1.5 billion Muslims is adequately and satisfactorily addressed.

Undoubtedly to restore its credibility and to become more democratic, representative and accountable, the Security Council should undergo serious reforms in terms not only of the question of its membership, but also in other crucial areas, such as its agenda, working methods and decision-making process.

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): El Salvador welcomes the initiative of the President of the General Assembly of convening this new debate on agenda items 9, "Report of the Security Council", and 122, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters".

The report of the Security Council, introduced by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, whom we thank, attests to the close relationship that should exist between the Council and the General Assembly, pursuant to paragraph 1 of Article 15 and paragraph 3 of Article 24 of the United Nations Charter, which require the Council to submit reports for the Assembly's consideration.

In my delegation's view, however, the submission of the report, while providing a valuable opportunity to continue promoting inter-organ dialogue and cooperation between the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as the other principal organs of the Organization, highlights the need for the Secretariat to make a greater effort with respect to drafting a report that has more analytical content that would allow us to assess the Council's activities. We believe that, within the framework of the relationships of the Security Council, we should not overlook the appropriate relationship that exists with the Peacebuilding Commission.

Despite the various positions expressed, my delegation believes that the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council offers new prospects for a more substantive dialogue on that issue. Thus, to the extent that flexibility exists among the various positions, we feel that, with the help of the facilitators, it may be possible to embark on a process of intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform.

However, such negotiations must be based on a text containing specific proposals, for there are still unresolved issues, such as categories of members, the question of the veto, the question of equitable geographical representation and the Council's working methods.

Throughout the process, El Salvador has advocated more active participation in the enlargement of the category of permanent and non-permanent members. Likewise, the revision and updating of the Council's working methods continues to be of importance in the setting of Security Council reform, a topic that embodies elements on which it should be possible to reach preliminary agreements.

My country recognizes the impetus given to Security Council reform, which has enabled Member States to consider innovative proposals, including the transitory or intermediary approach, consisting of the quest for a compromise solution reflecting the current geopolitical situation, and which would make it possible to overcome the stagnation that, as we all know, is affecting this topic.

In my delegation's view, the presidency of the sixty-second session could play a significant role in convening — and providing leadership in the short term — an intergovernmental negotiating process on Security Council reform that would take into account the progress made during the last session. In this regard, it is appropriate to reaffirm that speedy reform of the Security Council is an essential element in the overall endeavour to renew the United Nations so that it has broader representativity, is more efficient and transparent and sees its legitimacy strengthened in the implementation of its decisions.

Clearly, the current situation of the international system, in particular the question of collective security, is no longer in keeping with the structures for the promotion and defence of international peace and security erected in 1945. Therefore, as we have said before, a change in those structures is required so that they may reflect more objectiveiy the new balances of power and the regional and international geopolitical reality.

In this regard, my delegation believes that more attention should be paid to the question of the veto, given its sui generis nature and the fact that it is in itself the main key to achieving substantial progress in other related areas. The same applies to the question of categories of members, including an increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members; the proposal to consider equitable geographical representation; and possible regional representation.

El Salvador regards it as essential to increase the representation of Latin America and the Caribbean on the Security Council, and it has sympathy with consideration being given to the just aspirations of Africa in this respect.

In conclusion, I repeat that El Salvador is committed to supporting this process, in which we offer our active participation, until the successful conclusion of the task, which we hope will be as soon as possible.

Mr. Chidyausiku (Zimbabwe): My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola on behalf of the African Group.

We thank Ambassador Natalegawa of Indonesia, President of the Security Council for November, for his informative presentation on the work of the Security Council over the 12 months of the reporting period.

We also commend the efforts to move forward the Security Council reform process by the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, and her facilitators in the Open-ended Working Group.

The report this year again has a format and approach very similar to the previous year's. We call upon the Security Council to submit a more comprehensive and analytical annual report to the General Assembly, assessing the Council's work. In this regard, we again underscore the need for full respect for the functions and powers of the principal organs of the United Nations, in particular the General Assembly. We are very much disturbed by the encroachment of the Security Council on the work of other principal organs of the United Nations and their subsidiary bodies.

Zimbabwe welcomes the opportunity to participate in this debate on the important question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council. The debate offers us a timely opportunity not only to take stock of and monitor our progress, but also to pronounce ourselves on and exchange views that may very well facilitate greater understanding of various positions in our efforts to move the process forward. Zimbabwe's position is guided by the African common position enunciated in the Ezulwini Consensus.

My delegation is greatly encouraged by the growing acceptance of and agreement on the need for

expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of the Council's membership. An expanded Council will enjoy fresh perspectives in its deliberations and broader alliances in its decision-making, which is, after all, the purpose of our exercise: to make the Council more representative, legitimate and credible.

With regard to the way forward, Zimbabwe is of the view that expansion in both categories is essential to meet the needs and views of a vast majority of Member States. It is also essential to maintain a balanced ratio between the two categories of the Council's membership.

In this connection, Zimbabwe, like many other Member States, has constantly advocated comprehensive reform of the Council. We have underscored time and again the need for it to reflect the current political realities, with special emphasis on granting developing countries, in particular those in the African continent, their long overdue deserved representation in both categories of the Council.

In this regard, I reiterate my country's support for Africa's unwavering demand for two permanent seats, with the same powers and prerogatives as those of the current members, and five non-permanent seats in the expanded Council. We feel that these are reasonable demands, based on the principle of democratic representativity on a proportional basis among regions.

We are of the firm belief that United Nations reform without Security Council reform is incomplete. Reform of the working methods of the Council alone is again not enough, and structural reforms are therefore needed to complete the process. A less skewed and more balanced power structure in the Security Council, coupled with more democratic global governance institutions, is what the international community needs to be able to deliver in the important areas of security and economic and social development.

It is important that the interests of all countries and regions on this sensitive issue be seriously taken into account. In this regard, transparency and consensus must remain the custodians of our mutual trust and confidence on this issue.

For its part, Zimbabwe is ready to work together with other members in order to achieve comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti): My delegation is pleased to participate in this joint debate on agenda items 9 and 122, relating to the report of the Security Council and the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

Djibouti aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Angola on behalf of the African Group and by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

At the outset, I express our gratitude to the Council and the Secretariat for their commendable efforts in the preparation of this year's report, which, as in previous years, portrays an array of issues considered and decisions taken, as well as their intensity and variety. Over the last decade, the transparency of the Council's work has been on the rise, and the Council needs to be encouraged to do more; the wider membership still finds the consultation process quite sketchy.

The holding once a month of thematic debates on a variety of topics, ranging from global and gender issues to regional issues, has been found useful, as such debates enable members of the Council to exchange views with the wider membership of the United Nations and relevant organizations. It needs to be stressed, however, that this exercise, though commendable, may sometimes stray into areas that are within the purview or responsibility of other United Nations bodies. The Council must resist the temptation to encroach upon the mandates of other United Nations organs.

The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council seems only to rise in gravity with each passing day. The pace at which significant developments occur around the globe today is often unnerving, particularly when seen against the snail's pace of evolution in the international governance mechanisms — the Security Council, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to mention just the key ones.

Conflicts within States remain a prime danger, given the number of people and resources involved, and the impact such conflicts have on States in a region. There is a legitimate concern as well about what former Secretary-General Kofi Annan described as focusing so much on hard threats, forgetting the soft threats, which can equally be disruptive — such as the

fight against poverty, the HIV epidemic, environmental degradation, inequality and the desperation some people live under.

If the world is to act collectively against the prevailing dangers and threats, perhaps the only viable mechanism available to nations, and one which confers legitimacy, is the United Nations. When action is to be taken in conflict situations that pose threats to international peace and security, the Security Council is expected to respond promptly, adequately and in a non-discriminatory and non-selective manner.

In this respect, the Security Council as constituted today is not a representative body; rather, it continues in the shadow of the Second World War. There has been little or no change in its structure or power base, particularly on such issues as permanent membership or veto privileges, since its inception. Surely, there is an urgent need for an inclusive, transparent and democratic Council that takes seriously into consideration the interests of both developed and developing States. The membership and composition of the Council must reflect today's global political and economic realities if it is to slow the erosion of legitimacy it suffers, given the vast numbers of excluded peoples, States and regions.

Security Council reform is currently stalemated, not because of one country, one group or one region, but because of the growing hardening of positions by all. Briefly, the positions of major interest groups are as follows.

We all know about the unyielding stance of the five permanent members on the issue of the veto, and to a lesser extent on the composition and size of the Council. In conformity with the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, Africa is asking for not fewer than two permanent seats, with all the prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership, including the right of veto, in addition to five non-permanent seats.

On the other hand, the countries of the Group of Four — Brazil, Germany, India and Japan — propose to postpone the extension of veto privileges to new permanent members, and instead suggest revisiting this issue at a later date, perhaps after a decade or so, through a review process.

The Uniting for Consensus group is categorical on the increase of permanent seats, as advocated by others, and has proposed variations and options, but rigorously advocates increasing the non-permanent category for the time being, in the absence of agreement on the permanent category.

It was against the backdrop of these ever-widening divergences that, thanks to the remarkable persistence of the President at the sixty-first Session, wide-ranging consultations on all aspects of Council reform were undertaken through facilitators whose bold, analytical and creative variety of options, approaches and formulations attempted to breathe new life into the negotiations. Throughout the entire process, the facilitators intensified efforts to achieve substantive breakthroughs on all the five themes under discussion: size of an enlarged Council; categories of membership; question of regional representation; question of the veto; and the Council's working methods. The President mandated the facilitators to conduct open, transparent and inclusive consultations, with a view to making the most accurate assessment possible of the state of play on Security Council reform.

At the outset, we all agreed that maintaining the status quo was unacceptable, regardless of the theme. We further felt that flexibility on all themes by all members was the key to achieving tangible results. It was also underscored that during this exercise we should always bear in mind that any enlargement of the Council should address the under-representation of developing countries as well as of small States.

So, over the course of the following several months in 2007, the facilitators engaged in comprehensive and far-reaching consultations on all themes and all aspects of Council reform. The most interesting idea the facilitators proposed related to the notion of a transitional approach, whereby issues not agreed upon could be deferred to a review process at a predetermined date, while Member States would continue to retain their initial positions. This so-called intermediary arrangement may sound fine when taken at face value, but in reality it suffers from an oversimplification of the prevailing profound differences.

In place of achieving concrete progress now, through hard choices and compromises, the proposal is to consider a mandatory review as a solution to our stalemate. In effect, this means that whatever cannot be negotiated today will be deferred to the review, and none of the stakeholders will have to give up their

original positions. Let us heed the well-tested saying, "Do not put off until tomorrow what you can do today".

Our colleagues who succeed us tomorrow will grapple with the review process only to discover that we had indeed abdicated our responsibilities to deal effectively with the crucial issues at the right time. We therefore fully support the continuation of negotiations at this session, building upon the work done in previous sessions, in particular the last one, with a view to achieving progress on all aspects of Security Council reform, as an integral part of the United Nations reform process.

Finally, our goal remains that of a safe world in which conflict is prevented before it erupts and causes incalculable destruction and loss of life. Many regions in the world, including the Horn of Africa, are beset by conflict and suffer from neglect and inattention. Some of the wars have lasted a long time, thus creating a generation of armed, uneducated and hopeless youth. The result has been State failures, endemic poverty, violence, instability, social disintegration and the collapse of governance. Such dysfunctional States also pose other threats, as potential breeding grounds of lawlessness and terrorism, and other kinds of crimes.

Obviously, the Council needs to demonstrate greater sensitivity towards poor countries embroiled in brutal conflicts. Those States require urgent attention in peacemaking and peacekeeping considerations. Closely related to this topic are post-conflict peacebuilding commitments, which so far remain fragile, with mixed results.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.